

A MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR AND LEGACY PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE

June 2000

Dear Burlington Resident:

You hold the future of Burlington in your hands. This Legacy Project Action Plan provides a blueprint for change for the economic, environmental, social, and cultural health of our community for generations to come.

Over the course of the past year, hundreds of people from all parts of the city have come together to build a common vision of Burlington's future. They have recognized the challenges that increasing suburban sprawl poses not only to the economic and social vitality of our city, but also to the environmental and social health of our entire region. They have seen that Burlington's growth has subsided in recent years and that this trend may not bode well for the future. Working together, they have committed to reversing this trend and to spurring the growth in high-quality jobs, affordable housing opportunities, and public and private infrastructure that will assure Burlington's continued preeminence as the economic and cultural hub of northern Vermont.

At the same time as this plan calls for carefully planned growth, it recognizes that we cannot abandon our commitment to the very things that make Burlington a special place in which to live, work, and raise our families.

It affirms that growth can only happen together with a firm commitment to preserving our city's physical and natural environment, maintaining open space, and strengthening the integrity and quality of life in our neighborhoods and families. It also recognizes that our commitment to the health and vitality of future generations begins with investing in greater educational, employment, social, and recreational opportunities for the young people of today.

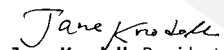
Working collaboratively with unity of purpose, we will achieve the healthy future detailed in this plan through the strong, active involvement of all the city's residents in governance and day-to-day decision-making. People from all sectors of our community must continue to strive together to make our collective vision a reality.

This Burlington Legacy Project Action Plan provides a road map to a healthier tomorrow. Let's navigate together the exciting and rewarding journey that it details.

On May 19, 1999, Mayor Peter Clavelle announced the appointment of the project's steering committee. Its members include leaders from the business, low-income, environment, academic, youth, and social service communities. The committee's purpose is to oversee the public involvement campaign and prepare the action plan.


Peter Clavelle, Mayor
City of Burlington

Steering Committee Co-Chairs:


Jane Knodell, President
Burlington City Council


Wayne Roberts, President
Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of
Commerce

Steering Committee Members:


William Boettcher, CEO
Fletcher Allen Health Care

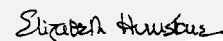

Rabbi Joshua Chasan
Ohavi Zedek Synagogue



Marc Companion
Ocean Arks International



Larry Forcier
University of Vermont


Dinah Goldberg
Youth Representative


Wanda Hines, Director
Chittenden Emergency Food Shelf

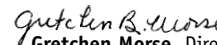

Beth Humstone, Executive Director
Vermont Forum on Sprawl



Donna Jemilo-Howell
Superintendent,
Burlington School District


Scott Johnstone, Secretary
Vermont Agency of Natural Resources

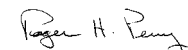

Bill Kelly
University of Vermont (Retired)

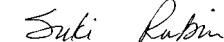

Michael Monte, Director
Burlington Community and Economic
Development Office



Gretchen Morse, Director
United Way of Chittenden County

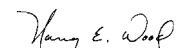

Melinda Moulton, Redeveloper
Main Street Landing Company


Paul Perrault, CEO
Chittenden Bank


Roger Perry, President
Champlain College


Suki Rubin
Social Worker (Retired)


Mary Sullivan
Trinity College,
Vermont State Legislator


Nancy Wood
Home, Farm and Garden
Research Associates



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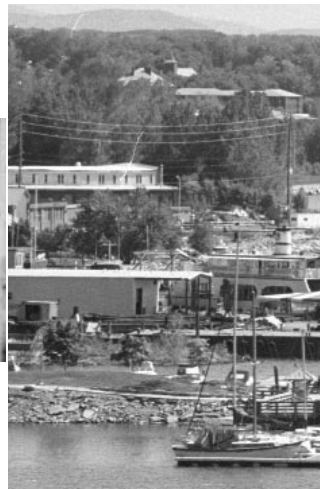
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THE BURLINGTON LEGACY PROJECT: BECOMING A SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY

Burlington has won national awards for being a livable city, for offering a clean environment and a vibrant lifestyle, for being a place where people can choose to raise their families and to start a business, and for the quality of its higher education institutions and its health care facilities. All of these attributes help make Burlington unique.

Can we bottle Burlington's formula to insure that it will continue to offer all the things that we love into the future?

Going into the 21st century, Burlington faces many challenges. In the city there is a shortage of affordable housing that has reached crisis proportions. Too many of our children are growing up in poverty. Lake Champlain is struggling with the invasion of exotic species; the runoff from streets and farms; the discharge from sewage plants, boats, industries, and homes. People in the neighborhoods have a growing concern for their personal safety, and they have to travel farther and farther for basic services. Traffic has come to a standstill on many streets and the burgeoning student population crowds family neighborhoods. Rampant commercial and industrial growth in surrounding communities has threatened the vibrancy of Burlington's downtown and its economic viability.

What steps can we take now to solve these problems and leave our children with a healthy city, with good jobs, high quality education, and a clean and safe environment for everyone?

To keep pace with the county's growth and maintain the city's role as the cultural and economic center of the region, Burlington in the future will need to reverse current trends. The growth needs to be managed appropriately and benefit residents equally, but it has the potential to contribute enormously to the economy, to the possibilities for inexpensive and non-polluting transportation systems, and to the development of affordable housing. Burlington's greatest

challenge in the years ahead will be to integrate all of the unique ways that the city meets the needs of its citizens into a comprehensive strategy for growth and improvement.

How do we provide adequate housing for a growing population and still preserve open space? How do we encourage new businesses to locate in Burlington so we can promote livable-wage job growth, while minimizing vehicular traffic in the city? How can we maximize our use of local food and other resources, yet assure that people have access to affordable basic goods? How do we increase density of population but maintain the character of our neighborhoods?

The Legacy Project does not resolve these tensions, but provides a framework for an ongoing community dialogue on how to achieve these dual goals.

By planning ahead for the year 2030, the city is saying that we want to choose both good jobs and a clean environment. We want to preserve the neighborhoods that make the city a home and accommodate new growth. We want all of our citizens to play critical roles in decision-making about our future. This is the essence of becoming a sustainable city—meeting our current needs without compromising our values, or the lives and health of future generations.

A sustainable Burlington will not be utopia. The city will still have problems to solve. The city will have to work to distribute the benefits and burdens of development equitably. Economic initiatives will increase the value and vitality of human and natural resources. Everyone will need to work together to conserve, enhance, and renew our natural, financial, and human resources.

If we succeed, the sense of community—and the connections that are made and maintained through caring human relationships, through our schools, our neighborhoods and our cultural, recreational, and health and social systems—will be the heart and soul of the city's life.





LISTENING AND LEARNING: THE COMMUNITY PROCESS

People from all parts of Burlington have come together through the Legacy Project to build a common vision. The process began in August 1999, when thousands of surveys were distributed at community events and through several hundred agencies and organizations, asking people to share their hopes and dreams for the future of the

city. Hundreds of citizens responded, sharing their perceptions of Burlington's greatest strengths and most glaring weaknesses, and their visions for a healthier tomorrow for all of our families, friends, and neighbors.

Following on the heels of these surveys, focus groups were convened in the fall, starting at the neighborhood level through Burlington's Neighborhood Planning Assemblies (NPAs). Next, subject-specific focus groups were held to discuss areas of concern and opportunities related to the economy,

environment, energy, transportation, health care, and education. The Legacy Project staff also spent hundreds of hours in informal dialogue with citizens of Burlington, reaching out to clients at the Chittenden Emergency Food Shelf, the Committee on Temporary Shelter Daystation, the Heineberg and Champlain Senior Centers, the University of Vermont Environmental Council, and parent-teacher organizations from many city schools. In the end, individuals from more than 60 community-based organizations shared their thoughts.

The Legacy Project also made a special effort to involve young people in shaping this plan. Focus groups were held at city schools, with student councils, and in collaboration with more than 20 youth service providers. In November 1999, a 12-member delegation presented a "Youth Agenda for Burlington" to Mayor Peter Clavelle and members of the Legacy Project Steering Committee, highlighting the leading issues and concerns voiced by young people.

Burlington teens also worked collaboratively with the Lake Champlain Basin Science Center and Very Special Arts Vermont to design and deliver a curriculum focused on sustainability to school-aged youths.

The youngest Burlingtonians also had an opportunity to express their ideas about the future through art, communicating their visions through printmaking, paper-making, and storytelling. Poster and essay contests in all Burlington schools allowed young people to be heard. Their creative efforts were displayed in City Hall during February 2000.

The Legacy Project then held a series of four public hearings on the first draft of the project plan. More than 200 concerned community members attended the hearings, providing an opportunity for individuals

and organizations to comment on recommended actions and suggest changes and additions. Their feedback was used to develop a revised draft plan that was sent to 900 residents and community organizations for comment, and also distributed at a wide range of community functions, including the annual WinterFest, and Earth Day celebrations. Finally, on Tuesday, March 28, 2000, the Legacy Project held a "Summit on the City's Future" in City Hall, where 300 people gathered to offer a final round of public comment on the project and set priority actions for our future.

You hold the results of this extensive public effort in your hands. We have listened carefully and learned a great deal. This plan is your legacy to the future generations who will call Burlington home.



THE COMMON VISION

Five major themes emerged in the common vision that Burlington residents hold for the future of the city. These are:

- maintaining Burlington as a regional population, government, cultural, and economic center with livable-wage jobs, full employment, social supports, and housing that matches job growth and family incomes
- improving quality of life in neighborhoods
- increasing participation in community decision-making
- providing youth with high-quality education and social supports, and lifelong learning opportunities for all
- preserving environmental health



GUIDE TO THE PLAN

GOAL STATEMENTS

Under the themes of the common vision are goal statements that describe our vision for the year 2030.

PRIORITY ACTIONS

Each goal includes priority actions for achieving that goal.

OTHER ACTIONS

Each goal includes other actions that follow the priority actions.

MEASURING OUR PROGRESS

Each goal lists community indicators to measure our progress and look at trends.

PROFILES

Profiles accompanying each section of the plan provide a glimpse of the current contributions and passionate commitment Burlington residents are making for a better future.

At Our Best profiles

describe selected programs and activities already under way in Burlington that will help us attain the goals of the Legacy Project.

Voices of the Vision

profiles share the words, insights, and dreams of diverse residents who have contributed to the development of this plan.

Burlington residents of all ages and backgrounds share a common vision: achieving a thriving economy while preventing the loss of open spaces and farmlands skirting the city. The Legacy Project believes that one way to achieve this vision is by absorbing more of the region's growth within the city's limits, carefully balancing the benefits and burdens of this growth. The downtown core will be a vital regional hub where essential goods and services are readily available to all. Well-trained workers will earn high wages while living and working right here in Burlington, commuting easily to their jobs using an affordable, accessible, and seamless public transportation system and bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly roads and sidewalks. Businesses will be eager to locate, form, and expand here.

To achieve a sustainable economy, Burlington must invest in both its people and infrastructure. We should encourage business development, promote livable wages and full employment, and assure long-term commitment to the city by businesses and employees alike. Mixed-use, environmentally and socially conscious development should be supported—development that concentrates growth downtown and in other designated neighborhood centers in the city. And finally, policies and practices should be developed to encourage consumers, businesses and institutions to support and patronize locally owned and operated businesses.

ECONOMY • OVERVIEW

Creating a Vibrant Urban Center

- Work for regional cooperation
- Redevelop "brownfields"
- Continue waterfront revitalization
- Expand access to essential goods and services

Economic Security

- Develop new business and job opportunities
- Increase quality child care options
- Develop job readiness training center
- Maintain economic "safety net"

Economic Self-Reliance

- Support dynamic business mix
- Support women and minority-owned enterprises
- Expand agricultural products and markets
- Develop an eco-park
- Expand commercial incubator space

Transportation

- Establish satellite park-and-ride facilities
- Provide for safe pedestrian and bicycle traffic
- Ensure accessibility for mobility impaired residents





The Intervale Community Farm

A dozen farms dot the fertile floodplain of the Winooski River in Burlington's Intervale. Growing and proffering tomatoes and herbs, cut flowers and berries, fresh greens, honey, bedding plants and more, the farms collectively represent a rich and highly productive agricultural resource within the city limits of Burlington. We reap a significant harvest from this working landscape, just minutes from downtown.

The largest and oldest of the Intervale farms—the Intervale Community Farm—is the essence of human-scale, cooperative, community-oriented farming. Founded in 1989, it is an outstanding example of community-supported agriculture (CSA), a growing national movement of “membership” farms that provide participants with a share of the farm's harvest each week throughout the season in exchange for an affordable annual fee. The Intervale's Full Moon Farm and Urban Roots Farm also operate on the CSA model. Other farms in Burlington's agricultural heartland sell at area farmers' markets and service commercial accounts.

The Intervale Community Farm currently grows food on 14 of its 30 acres for 400 households totaling about 1,000 people who take advantage of the farm's bountiful weekly harvest from late spring through late fall. Popular among city families for its high-quality produce and affordability, the farm has wait-listed new shareholders in recent years. Erin Hanley, assistant farm manager, is an enthusiastic promoter of healthy food grown and distributed locally.

“Our members really want to know more about their food—and about organic food in particular,” Hanley explains. “They appreciate the personal contact with the farmer and seeing how and where the food is grown. CSA is a great way to support agriculture in Vermont and put money back into the local economy.”

CREATING A VIBRANT URBAN CENTER

GOAL: In 2030, Burlington has absorbed the greater portion of the region's population growth, expanding to as much as 65,000. The city is the center of culture, commerce, education, health care, and government. Housing and job growth have kept pace with the population.

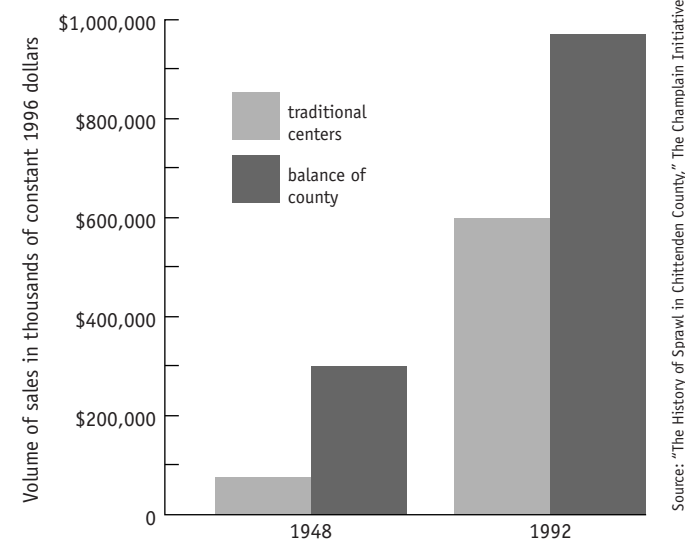
The Legacy Project believes that the most desirable means of both achieving a robust economy and countering sprawl is substantial, well-planned growth within the city of Burlington itself. The city has recently experienced a loss of retail business and a significant slowing in its population growth as compared to the

rest of Chittenden County. If we reverse this process and Burlington were to absorb a higher percentage of local growth—as a means of countering suburban sprawl—the population could reach as high as 65,000 in 30 years.

Burlington must grow carefully but significantly if we are to guarantee

everyone the benefits of a healthy economy. We foresee a Burlington where the downtown is thriving; well-trained workers hold skilled, livable-wage jobs; and businesses are eager to form, locate, and expand. Our biggest challenge is to carefully balance the benefits and burdens of growth, providing adequate social supports so that every resident can succeed. Collaboration with other communities in the region and the state will be essential in assuring that this occurs.

Change in Retail Sales



Priority Actions:

① Work with regional planners and neighboring communities to insure that Burlington is the primary growth center of the region, intended to prevent sprawl by absorbing a higher percentage of regional growth than any other community.

② Redevelop vacant former industrial areas known as “brownfields” to absorb significant commercial and/or mixed-use growth.

③ Continue redevelopment of the waterfront as a mixed-use neighborhood accessible to all city residents for business, housing, cultural, and recreational needs.

④ Maintain and expand the number of businesses that offer essential goods and services within the city, readily available to all residents.

Other Actions:

① Reform the city tax structure. This might include lobbying the state to allow a consortium of towns to adopt local option taxes, including sales, rooms and meals, and fuel taxes; use of sales tax incremental financing at the municipal level to finance public and infrastructure enhancements; and establishment of a local property transfer tax to fund open space acquisition and preservation.

② Invest in new and existing infrastructure to support additional growth.

③ Reform permitting processes and other regulations to remove or revise standards that are inconsistent with controlled, sustainable growth.

④ Invest in and maintain an advanced telecommunications system with citywide accessibility for all.

⑤ Build on the city’s strong tourism base, focusing on the environmental, historical, recreational, cultural, and commercial attractions that draw tourists.

⑥ Allocate resources to maintain diverse cultural opportunities accessible to all, from art in public places to affordable studios and rehearsal spaces, teaching facilities, exhibition and performance venues, and lifelong education opportunities.

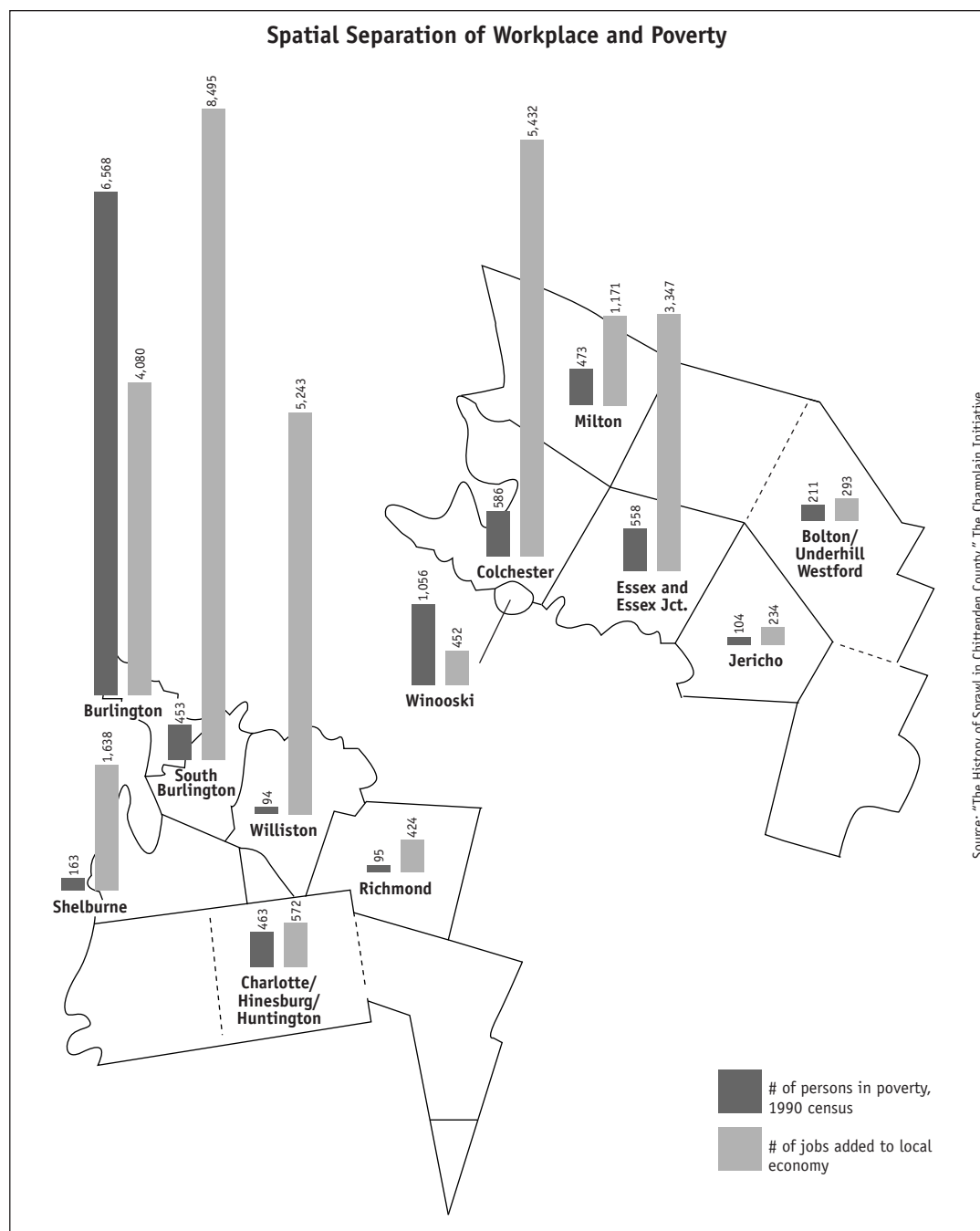


MEASURING OUR PROGRESS

INDICATORS TO WATCH

Burlington versus regional population,
job, and housing growth

Aggregate retail sales and employment data
for Burlington versus surrounding towns



AT OUR BEST



Bell Atlantic Builds for Diversity in the Workplace

Bell Atlantic is not only Vermont's largest supplier of telecommunications services, the company is also a leading role model for its exemplary commitment to diversity in the workplace and the community at large. That commitment starts at the top, where a strategic focus on diversity is incorporated in the corporate vision and values of the international telecommunications firm. And it is evident here in Vermont, where the company has made a concerted effort to promote diversity. Middle- and upper-level Bell Atlantic managers have 10 percent of their annual salaries at risk if diversity objectives aren't met.

Why is diversity such an integral part of community for Bell Atlantic?

"Our customers are diverse," says Bell Atlantic-Vermont President and Chief Executive Officer Louise McCarren. "If our employees better understand our customers, we're going to better understand their needs and have them choose us in a competitive business environment. So it just makes good sense to have our employee base reflect our customer base."

McCarren, who recently testified before the Education Committee of the Vermont House of Representatives on the importance of keeping schools free of racial and sexual harassment, continues: "Bell Atlantic also wants to choose from the largest possible pool of qualified candidates when selecting the best employees to work for us. Those candidates will include people of varying religions, first languages, work-life requirements, experience, race, gender, types of disabilities, and sexual orientation. To exclude anyone based on any of these characteristics doesn't make good business sense. To reach out to all has the opposite effect—it grows the pool of candidates. And that's what Bell Atlantic does."

To demonstrate its strong support for diversity, Bell Atlantic has collaborated with the Burlington-based Racial Justice and Equity Project to help identify

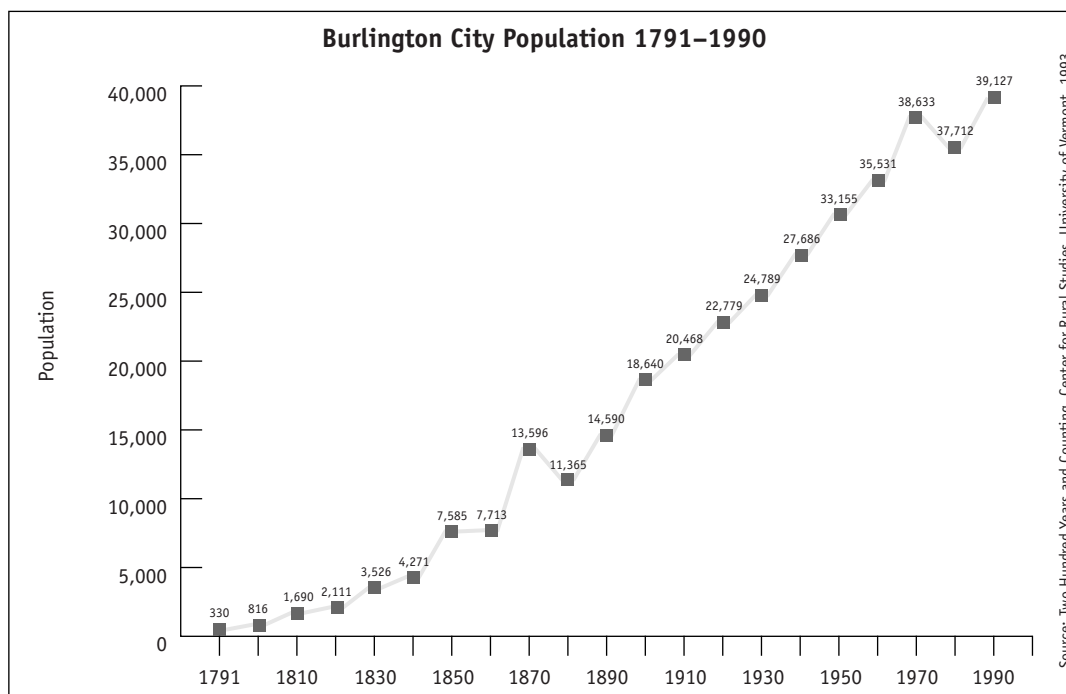
diverse candidates for job openings in Vermont. The company has also placed a series of three large advertisements in the Burlington Free Press to alert the public and potential job candidates that the company values diversity in its workforce and in the communities it serves.

“Once we successfully hire diverse candidates, they need to feel valued by their fellow employees and the company in order for us to retain them,” Bell Atlantic’s McCarren points out. “We’ve tried to foster a welcoming environment in Vermont by forming a diversity council within the company that plans diversity-related activities for the edification of everyone, including events that celebrate such special events as Black History Month and Women’s History Month.” Employee publications, the corporate Web site, and other communications also tout diversity as a major priority for the company business-wise. In yet another important workplace initiative, the company has written to woman- and minority-owned businesses in Vermont (certified as such by the state) and invited those firms to register with Bell Atlantic for opportunities to bid on goods and services.

Bell Atlantic also recognizes that no matter how much the company values diverse employees, it will have difficulty keeping them if the employees don’t feel welcome and comfortable in the communities where they live and work. That’s why the Bell Atlantic foundation invests both time and money in organizations and activities designed to help all Vermonters appreciate and embrace diversity.

“Our commitment to diversity is something we cherish and value,” concludes McCarren. “It flows logically from the top of our company right down to the grassroots level here in Vermont.”

Bell Atlantic has since become Verizon.



ECONOMIC SECURITY

GOAL: In 2030, all Burlington residents have access to livable-wage jobs, full employment and the necessary education and training to meet their families’ basic needs for food, shelter, clothing, health care, child care, and transportation.

Providing economic security and meeting all the basic needs of all the people of Burlington is fundamental to achieving a sustainable city. We must create more livable-wage jobs and offer people the superior training, education, and social supports they need to succeed in them. Earning a livable wage means having

enough income to provide a family with the basic needs of decent housing, sufficient food and clothing, and quality health and child care. This is a pressing issue in our community, where too many people earn wages that are not sufficient to secure these essential needs. Access to affordable, quality child care is particularly an

ongoing problem. As a community, we need to encourage employer-supported child care benefits and policies and advocate for adequate federal and state funding for child care subsidies. Finally, we also need to assure ready access to affordable, high-quality health care for all.



Wanda Hines

As director of the Chittenden Community Food Shelf, Wanda Hines has a special perspective on meeting basic needs in Burlington.

"It's pretty clear that we need to focus on food. We've lost three supermarkets in this community in the past year. Basic goods and services have disappeared downtown. That makes me very sad. We need to rebuild, replace, and expand food sources," she says.

"And the effort needs to be very inclusive," Hines adds. "We're a changing community and we need to address the needs of our growing ethnic communities—the African-Americans, the Bosnians, the Vietnamese, the Hispanics—for specialty foods. I love the foods of my tradition—the chitlins and the pig's feet. But people tell us they want oranges and right now we're offering them apples. We've done a poor job of responding."

Hines sees Burlington addressing its food needs from both local and outside sources. "We need to support local markets, but we need diversity too. The key is to keep our options open and affordable," she says.

The longtime community activist takes a similar approach to the questions of job growth and economic revitalization. "We need to create jobs that pay a decent wage and work cooperatively with other communities to make it happen. I'd like it if my daughter could be assured of getting a job as a teenager that will enable her to develop independence and a good work ethic. I'm not sure we can promise her that now," Hines says. "There needs to be job training for youths around how they present themselves—how they appear in public, how they talk to people, how to put together a good resume."

Hines also supports efforts to restore basic goods and services to Burlington's downtown. "We have to do a much better job at that. The goods just aren't there. Half the people we serve at the Food Shelf don't have private transportation or any easy way of getting out to the big stores in the suburbs. Affordability and access for specifically targeted groups need to be key."

Priority Actions:

- ① Support efforts to assure access to affordable high-quality health care for all through collaborative measures between providers, organizations, businesses, and individuals. Support existing and new outreach and prevention programs.
- ② Increase the availability of high-quality child care options that are affordable and accessible to all residents.

③ Develop a job readiness training center for higher skilled jobs in collaboration with local educational institutions, employers, and the Vermont Department of Employment and Training.

④ Provide an economic "safety net" for those who are unable to earn enough to meet their basic needs and collaborate with state agencies to eliminate disincentives such as the loss of welfare benefits for individuals returning to the workforce.

Other Actions:

- ① Seek more local control and community input into job training and social service programs that use state and federal dollars.
- ② Develop a regional technology high school and invest in better job skills training for youth.
- ③ Make the research and resources of higher education institutions available to drive new business and job development.
- ④ Ensure that all residents have access to affordable capital and financial services.



MEASURING OUR PROGRESS

INDICATORS TO WATCH

Number of full-time Burlington workers earning above the "livable wage"

Rate of low birth-weight babies

Percent of population receiving food stamps



ECONOMIC SELF-RELIANCE

GOAL: In 2030, Burlington has become more self-reliant through local ownership, control, and maximum use and reinvestment of local resources.

A sustainable economy requires a high degree of self-reliance and a diverse mix of businesses in a dynamic environment. Participants in the Legacy Project have spoken repeatedly of the need for increased local ownership of and support for local businesses. They have also called for the city and its people to make maximum use of local resources for basic needs. This will anchor the local economy which will need to successfully navigate the open waters of the global economy in years to come.

Burlington has a strong base and tradition of local ownership and self-reliance upon which to build. The Burlington Electric Department reports that there are 2,500 businesses within the city and 11 percent of all adults are self-employed. The Intervale is home to nine agricultural businesses, seven vegetable farms, a \$400,000 composting project, and the wood-fired McNeil electrical generating station.





Priority Actions:

- ① Develop and implement additional incentives and technical support to create a dynamic business mix. Create new businesses, livable-wage job opportunities, and economic development by providing goods and services locally.
- ② Support micro and small business development, including women- and minority-owned enterprises.
- ③ Increase production and marketing of agricultural products in the Intervale and support the distribution and consumption of locally produced foods through public and farmer's markets, a "food train," community gardens, and community-supported agriculture (CSA).
- ④ Develop an "Eco-Park" in the Intervale to create well-paying jobs tied to local agriculture and natural resources.
- ⑤ Develop more affordable commercial and incubator spaces downtown and in other designated areas throughout the city.

Other Actions:

- ① Combine the purchasing power of major institutions in the city (including the University of Vermont, Fletcher Allen Health Care, and the City of Burlington) to support businesses that will direct dollars to the local economy.
- ② Encourage individuals, businesses, and organizations to invest savings in local financial institutions that reinvest funds directly back into the community. Promote active community reinvestment among all local banks and financial institutions.
- ③ Provide creative financing and affordable capital for business growth through public/private partnerships.



1996 survey of the Burlington business community
Source: Burlington CEDO office



MEASURING OUR PROGRESS
INDICATORS TO WATCH

Number of Burlington business start-ups and closings

Businesses per sector by size

TRANSPORTATION

GOAL: In 2030, every Burlington resident has access to a diverse, seamless, multi-modal transportation system to travel easily to jobs, businesses, and recreational and cultural activities. Increased public transit and alternative transportation provides local and regional travel that is safe, accessible, efficient, and environmentally sound. Transportation within, to, and from the city relies less on individual vehicles and integrates the automobile with rail, bus, shuttle, boat, air, pedestrian, and bike transport.

Priority Actions:

- 1 Establish park-and-ride facilities with shuttles or other “people-mover” capabilities to the south, north, and east of downtown to reduce the number of automobiles travelling to the city center.
- 2 Provide for safe bicycle and pedestrian traffic, both in the city center and in connecting neighborhoods to schools, businesses, recreation areas and a regional system.
- 3 Ensure accessible routes throughout the city to residents who are mobility impaired.

Other Actions:

- 1 Develop a multi-modal transportation center.
- 2 Implement local and regional rail service to Burlington.
- 3 Increase investment in public transit to expand services locally and regionally, exploring a regional gas tax and other funding mechanisms.

MEASURING OUR PROGRESS

INDICATORS TO WATCH

Local/state/federal dollars invested in bicycle/pedestrian corridors as a percentage of total transportation dollars invested

Annual public transit ridership per capita

Number of alternative-fueled vehicles in the municipal fleet and number of alternative fueling stations in the city

AT OUR BEST



The Good News Garage

The Good News Garage is a nationwide role model for its success at meeting two critical community needs: skilled job training and affordable, reliable transportation.

The Burlington-based organization, a project of Lutheran Social Services of New England, solicits donated vehicles, trains people to recondition them, and provides the vehicles to people in need at the cost of the repairs.








“Our mission is to promote economic opportunity through our training program while providing dependable private transportation that in turn helps people succeed in the job market,” says Hal Colston, regional program director for Good News Garage.

Founded in 1996 as part of Burlington’s Old North End Enterprise Community, the program has recycled approximately 450 vehicles, 100 of which have been provided to Burlington residents. Working with trainees referred by the Vermont Departments of Employment and Training and Social Welfare, the Good News Garage has a 100-percent job placement record to date. Half of the program’s trainees have been women.

To be eligible to receive a Good News Garage vehicle, individuals must possess a valid driver’s license and earn less than 150 percent of the federal poverty level. “When we have to prioritize, we focus on the person who is already employed, whose car has died, and who needs a reliable vehicle to get to work,” Colston points out. “We also look at whether the person is about to start a job and needs transportation or needs a car in order to take part in a job training program.” Seventy-five percent of the program’s vehicle recipients find work and move off the welfare roles.

“Having reliable, affordable transportation makes all the difference,” Colston notes. “It blows away the whole notion that people don’t want to work. Good News Garage cars may not be dream cars, but they are cars that people can achieve their dreams with.”





People from all of Burlington's neighborhoods have built a vision for the future through the Legacy Project. They have spoken eloquently and often about the need to restore and strengthen our neighborhoods even as Burlington expands into a larger city. Neighborhoods will retain their historic character and architectural integrity, even as they grow and evolve. Residents will be committed to the betterment of their community and connected to their families, friends, and neighbors in meaningful ways.

"A healthy community is one where people feel a strong connection to their neighbors and value opportunities to work together for the betterment of all," says Rabbi Joshua Chasan of Burlington's Ohavi Zedek Synagogue. "I envision a community where people are self-respectful and mutually respectful, where each and every one of us fulfills our unique potential."

NEIGHBORHOODS • OVERVIEW

Quality of Life

- Adopt an open space protection plan
- Support restorative justice and dispute resolution programs
- Reduce sexual and domestic violence and child abuse
- Strengthen neighborhood associations

Housing

- Construct new affordable housing
- Strengthen code enforcement and minimum housing standards
- Build additional on-campus student housing
- Redevelop "brownfields" for housing
- Revise zoning regulations



The Burlington Community Land Trust

Ginny Thiels surveys her Elmwood Avenue neighborhood with pride, thankful for having fulfilled her home ownership dream.

Thiels, an administrator with the Burlington Electric Department, is a single mother of two boys. Each school day she delights in walking Benjamin, 10, and Quintyn, 7, to classes at the H.O. Wheeler Community School, a short stroll from home. The boys also take part in after-school activities at the nearby Boys and Girls Club of Burlington. Their new neighborhood is a comfortable fit for Ginny, for whom home ownership would have been impossible without the help of the Burlington Community Land Trust (BCLT).

The BCLT provided Ginny with a \$15,000 grant to cover the down payment on the comfortable, 1,200-square-foot house. Using these grants, the BCLT brings additional area homes into land trusts. When Ginny bought her home, she signed legal documents that assure it will remain affordable to the next buyer when it is sold. With respect to single family homes, the land trust also owns the land and the BCLT home-buyer enters into a lease agreement for the use of it.

Highly successful, the BCLT is the largest affordable housing land trust in the nation, based on the number of units held in trust. The BCLT properties total 250—primarily single-family homes and condominiums—with 75 percent of those units located in Burlington.

“Without the down payment assistance, my loan note would have been much larger and I simply wouldn’t have been able to afford the mortgage,” comments Ginny. “The Land Trust staff also helped build my confidence as I searched for a home: I knew what questions to ask because they walked me through the whole process.”

Colin Bloch, the BCLT home ownership specialist who assisted Ginny, succinctly sums up the many benefits of this vital community resource: “Its uniqueness is that it keeps affordable housing available in perpetuity—and in addition to providing access to land and housing for people of modest means, it also promotes neighborhood preservation and improvement.”



QUALITY OF LIFE

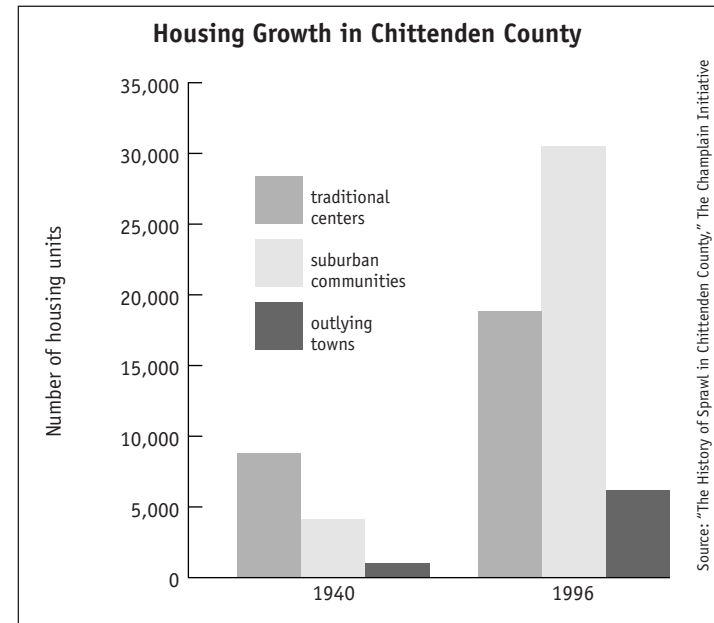
GOAL: In 2030, Burlington’s development has enhanced the quality of life in neighborhoods that reflect the demographic diversity of the city as a whole. Development preserves neighborhood identity, minimizes traffic and noise, and provides ample open space. Neighbors feel safe on the streets and free from domestic violence in their homes, while enjoying many opportunities for working together on community improvement.

The Legacy Project recognizes that a city is strongest when it is composed of thriving neighborhoods, each unique in its own right but connected in seamless ways to the city as a whole. It encourages mixed-use, mixed-income neighborhoods and embraces ethnic and

cultural diversity. It also recognizes that a quality environment—free of heavy traffic, noise, and the fear of crime and violence, with plenty of open space for recreation and community gatherings—is critical to maintaining healthy neighborhoods.

Freedom from fear also extends to our homes: state and county data shows that violence in the home is a greater threat to the health of our community’s residents than violence committed by strangers in public places. In the last five years, thirteen percent more assaults took place in people’s homes versus the streets. The consequences of domestic violence significantly affect our residents and the quality of our community life. They must be addressed in any long-term effort to build a sustainable city.





Priority Actions:

① Adopt an open space protection plan supporting conservation education, the establishment of a "land conservation fund," and a development review process to assure that there is accessible, well-maintained open space in all neighborhoods.

② Support restorative justice programs and alternative models of dispute resolution and community service.

③ Increase education and prevention efforts to reduce sexual and domestic violence and child abuse.

④ Strengthen neighborhood block/street associations citywide and support neighborhood cleanup activities on a regularly scheduled basis.

Other Actions:

① Institute "three-dimensional" planning, using computer and physical modeling to identify areas where building density and heights can increase while maintaining critical view corridors, air flow, and sunlight.

② Strengthen public/private partnerships to create and implement a plan for lowering alcohol and drug abuse in the city.

③ Increase the scope and effectiveness of community-based policing.

④ Place all utility lines underground.

The Public Safety Project



Developing and sustaining neighborhood organizations, providing leadership training, and making resources available to community

improvement projects are all vital to assuring a high quality of life in Burlington's neighborhoods. The Public Safety Project—an Old North End Enterprise Community strategy now in its fifth year—promotes a healthier Burlington through its collaboration with a network of more than 25 neighborhood associations and watch groups representing more than 300 citizens active in improving their community. In doing so, the project encourages neighborhood self-sufficiency, localized decision-making, and a stronger sense of connection between neighbors.

Daniel Blankenship lives on Murray Street in the Old North End. An AmeriCorps*VISTA member with the Public Safety Project, Blankenship has also been a strong advocate for neighborhoods through the Burlington Legacy Project. He sees the Public Safety Project as playing a key role in enhancing city neighborhoods.

"The Public Safety Project encompasses much more than just safety," Blankenship explains. "It embraces the whole range of quality of life issues that the Legacy Project has been addressing—from traffic intensity to litter, unleashed dogs to disputes between neighbors, petty crime, and vandalism."

To spur community involvement and empowerment, Blankenship and his AmeriCorps*VISTA colleagues with the Public Safety Project conduct monthly leadership workshops on a broad range of topics relevant to neighborhood improvement, including sessions on identifying and correcting problem properties, home safety, and involving youth in neighborhood activities and decision-making.

The project also plays a critical role in outreach and organization of regularly scheduled neighborhood



HOUSING

GOAL: In 2030, every Burlington resident—regardless of age, income, family makeup, religion, sexual orientation, or ethnic background—has access to safe, accessible, affordable housing. Homeless shelters are no longer needed. Preservation and construction of housing keeps pace with job and household income growth in the city.

No issue poses a greater challenge to the quality of life in our neighborhoods than that of providing good, affordable housing for all Burlington residents.

Individual home ownership in Burlington is well below the national average. The

rental market for quality housing is tight, exacerbated not only by the significant student population in the city, but also by overall population increase. The vacancy rate has hovered below one percent for each of the past four years. Demand for quality low-

income housing is also extraordinary: more than 930 households remain on the Burlington Housing Authority's waiting list at any given time—a figure that has stayed relatively consistent for five years. Together with the neighboring city of Winooski, Burlington houses one-third of Chittenden County's population but two-thirds of its publicly assisted housing units and approximately three-quarters of publicly assisted tenants.



cleanup efforts, working with Community-Based Action Teams coordinated through the Mayor’s office. To date these teams have removed nearly 30 tons of trash and 12 tons of recyclable materials from city neighborhoods.

Of critical importance is the Public Safety Project’s home base—the Burlington Police Department—and the strong connection that builds with the city’s community-based policing efforts.

“That’s essential to the whole effort,” notes Blankenship. “A primary responsibility is for us to be a liaison between the Police Department and the residents of the Old North End. It’s all about helping to build trust, communication, and the flow of information. We try to encourage a healthy, respectful environment so people feel comfortable coming to the police for help.”

Stronger linkage between the police and neighborhood residents seems to be paying off. Blankenship cites noise complaints, an all-to-frequent woe, as one example. Complaints last October dropped 60 percent from the previous year in one section of the Old North End.

“We’re clearly seeing an impact,” says Blankenship. “We’re planting the seeds of change in the neighborhoods. When people work together to build a community, they create many opportunities to improve their lives.”



These numbers tell a sobering story. Vermont economist Arthur Woolf notes that “at some point...a severe shortage of housing starts to erode an area’s overall economy.” If Burlington is to succeed as a sustainable city, critical attention must be paid to developing a diverse range of excellent, economical housing opportunities in all neighborhoods. This is not an issue to be confronted by the city alone: solutions to the housing crunch will require close cooperation and coordination with other communities in the region, as well as the development of affordable housing in all communities.

Priority Actions:

- ➊ Support public-private partnerships for capitalization, construction, permitting, and inspection assistance to construct affordable housing.
- ➋ Strengthen code enforcement and provide incentives and disincentives to support minimum housing standards.
- ➌ Work closely with the University of Vermont to build additional student housing on campus and resolve neighborhood issues of noise, congestion, and parking.
- ➍ Invest in rehabilitation of older housing stock while preserving its architectural integrity. Revise building codes and provide incentives to encourage owner investment.
- ➎ Develop “brownfields”—underutilized former industrial sites—for use as housing construction sites.
- ➏ Revise zoning regulations in targeted areas as part of the neighborhood design process to allow “building up, not out,” creating an environment that is safe, accessible, and attractive, while also allowing for scenic viewscapes.

Other Actions:

- ➐ Develop alternative models of home ownership such as cooperatives and cohousing.



MEASURING OUR PROGRESS	
INDICATORS TO WATCH	
Number of residents in emergency shelter	
Number of permanent affordable housing units in the city versus the county	
Percent of population spending more than 30 percent of income on housing costs	

GETTING INVOLVED IN DECISION-MAKING

One of the hallmarks of a sustainable community is the extent to which it involves a broad section of its citizens in all aspects of decision-making about major issues. This means involvement that occurs not only in the voting booth at election time. It also means providing the opportunity to have a greater impact on all decisions made not only by the government, but also by local businesses, institutions, non-profit organizations, neighborhood associations, and more.

In striving toward this kind of wide-ranging public participation in governance, Burlington must address three key issues: the need for responsiveness and accountability on the part of government, the need for local control over decisions affecting neighborhoods, and the need for informed decision-making.

GOVERNANCE • OVERVIEW

Responsive Government

- Increase diversity on decision-making boards
- Implement a neighborhood design process
- Reorganize city government
- Develop more creative, centralized information access

Youth Civic Participation

- Implement civics curriculum in the schools
- Develop community service and internships in civic affairs
- Add youth representatives to boards and commissions







RESPONSIVE GOVERNMENT

GOAL: In 2030, Burlington is a national model for its responsive style of governance and informed, active citizenry. Voter turnout has increased to 66 percent. Residents have an active voice in decisions affecting their neighborhoods.

Priority Actions:

- ❶ Increase diversity—including youths and minorities—on decision-making boards of all types and provide a regular “report card” on progress.
- ❷ Implement a neighborhood design process as part of each municipal development plan update, providing residents with more of a voice about how their neighborhood will grow in the future.

- ❸ Reorganize city government to make it more responsive and accountable to the voters, with the mayor overseeing city departments while balancing strong input from commissioners and other committed citizen-volunteers. Implement more effective and centralized management.

- ❹ Develop more creative and centralized information about public meetings to increase participation in civic activities.

Other Actions:

- ❶ Decentralize more decision-making to the neighborhood level through neighborhood town meetings, block parties, and the making of budget decisions by neighborhoods.
- ❷ Use referenda and community polling through neighborhood polling stations, cable television access, neighborhood gatherings, and the internet to increase public input in decision-making.
- ❸ Replace polling stations by mailing ballots to every resident in the city for elections.
- ❹ Provide electoral information and polling centers in multiple languages and formats with outreach to new residents.

MEASURING OUR PROGRESS

INDICATORS TO WATCH

Percent of population eligible to vote versus registered or actually voted

Diversity (minorities and youths) of elected and appointed officials



YOUTH CIVIC PARTICIPATION

GOAL: In 2030, youth participation in Burlington civic activities is significant and young voters turn out at the polls ahead of national averages. Youth are empowered to participate in decisions that affect their city and neighborhoods.

Providing our young people with the education to make informed decisions and participate more effectively in our community is just the first step toward greater empowerment for youth. Burlington must also strive to provide “a place at the table” for youth when making decisions that affect their community and their future. Young people ages 18–24 years currently have the lowest voter turnout of any age group.

Priority Actions:

- 1 Implement a civics curriculum in all city schools.
- 2 Identify and support community service and internship placements for students to participate in civic affairs.
- 3 Provide youth representation on city boards and commissions, with the representative(s) to be chosen by youths themselves.

Other Actions:

- 1 Strengthen school student councils and develop meaningful connections between the councils, the community, and student government associations at local colleges and universities.
- 2 Present an annual youth agenda to the city council.
- 3 Create and support a student advisory committee to the school superintendent that would also advise city commissions and boards on key issues.

MEASURING OUR PROGRESS

INDICATORS TO WATCH

Percentage of residents ages 18–24 eligible to vote versus registered versus actually voting

Community service hours by students

AT OUR BEST

The Champlain Initiative’s *Our Children, Our Future*

The Champlain Initiative is a community partnership with the goal of strengthening the Champlain Valley as a healthy place to live, work, and raise a family. It has made the health of our youth a major focus of its efforts. Through its *Our Children, Our Future* initiative, the community-wide partnership encourages actions rooted in respect and caring for all children, adolescents, and teenagers.

Our Children, Our Future promotes positive youth attitudes, behaviors, and decision-making by striving to provide all of our community’s young people with 40 essential “developmental assets” as defined by the Minneapolis-based Search Institute. This effort includes a highly active speakers bureau, a recruitment program aimed at getting young people involved in community service, and other special projects.

The initiative also assisted the Vermont Agency of Human Services in administering a countywide survey profiling student lifestyles and attitudes in regional middle and high schools. The report that resulted from this effort—*Youth and Developmental Assets: A Framework for Success*—provides a blueprint for what needs to be done to assure the long-term social, emotional, and physical health of our youth.

Comprehensive and enlightening, *Youth and Developmental Assets* details the developmental assets that are the basis for young people’s success and describes how local children are doing in acquiring these assets. It demonstrates that constructive behaviors by youth increases as these assets are acquired—and it challenges all local residents to be “asset-builders” for children. These assets take many forms, including supportive families, caring neighborhoods, clear rules and consequences for misbehavior, embracing of social justice and equity, the provision of community-based programs to channel youthful idealism, energy, and creativity.



YOUTH AND LIFE SKILLS

BUILDING LIFE SKILLS FOR ALL AGES

Nothing will have a greater impact on the future of Burlington than the physical, social, cultural, and emotional development of our citizens. Education and the development of social skills and community connections are lifelong processes that should not end with youth. As a sustainable city, Burlington must be committed to providing people from birth through the “golden years” with a wealth of opportunities to build the social and job skills critical to being successful members of our community.

We must begin with the youngest residents of our city. Youths have played a significant role in the Burlington Legacy Project. They have used it as a sounding board to share their visions of the city’s

future and to voice their concerns that we do not empower and pay sufficient attention to young people today. Through the Legacy Project, Burlington has learned that its youths are passionate about their beliefs, devoted to the city, and determined to have a meaningful impact on its future direction.

It is essential that our educational and governmental institutions do better at integrating youths into our community, channeling their creative energy and supporting them in their efforts to serve their neighbors. And this commitment needs to extend beyond our classrooms and workplaces to all avenues of our lives, recognizing that learning, self-improvement, and building a healthy community are lifelong ventures.

YOUTH AND LIFE SKILLS • OVERVIEW

Our Schools

- Implement a pilot program that emphasizes character development, personal responsibility and conflict resolution skills
- Provide a welcoming, supportive environment for a diverse student body

Youth Opportunities

- Provide more diverse out-of-school activities and opportunities
- Provide “place-based,” experiential learning opportunities
- Strengthen link between schools and social service providers

Lifelong Learning

- Fund effective early childhood education programs
- Develop schools as multigenerational community centers
- Support libraries and other literacy programs





OUR SCHOOLS

GOAL: In 2030, Burlington parents send their children to schools that are models of educational excellence where students develop skills for a lifelong commitment to learning. Schools promote tolerance and respect for all people and are safe from violence and harassment.

Education should expand and not limit the choices available to future generations across the city. Learning should take place in safe, attractive, well-equipped schools. It should also occur in a wide range of community-based settings, where youths learn first-hand the value and importance of community service. Learning should instill our young people with respect and appreciation for cultural differences and provide them with a strong commitment to learning throughout life. Finally, learning should be a success for all students, regardless of their backgrounds or learning styles.

Priority Actions:

- ① Design, implement, and evaluate a pilot educational program in the schools that emphasizes character development, personal responsibility, and conflict resolution skills.
- ② Embrace the diversity of the community by assuring a welcoming environment in schools, including support systems to integrate new students from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Other Actions:

- ① Work with local artists to design, implement and fund enhanced visual and performing arts programs for all Burlington schools.
- ② Develop programs to eliminate discriminatory behavior in schools and provide an annual “report card” to the community as a measure of how well we are doing in reducing incidents.

MEASURING OUR PROGRESS

INDICATORS TO WATCH

High school graduation/dropout rate

High school seniors with educational, training, or employment plans

School attendance for all grades



YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES

GOAL: In 2030, all Burlington youth have access to meaningful and rewarding recreational, cultural and employment opportunities that support positive values, self identity and integration into the community.

Community surveys and discussions with local youths have consistently spotlighted the need for more organized recreational, social, and community service opportunities for young people in Burlington. There is a need to strengthen existing programs and develop new facilities and activities aimed at providing young people with supervised, secure, and healthful gathering places with more opportunities to get involved with their community in constructive ways. Stronger linkages between schools, social service agencies, and community-based programs are especially needed for youths at risk.

Priority Actions:

- 1 Provide youth with more diverse out-of-school activities and opportunities including a 24-hour youth center, skatepark, and other gathering places.
- 2 Provide more “place-based” experiential, and out-of-school educational opportunities for youths, including internships, work-study programs, and community service requirements.
- 3 Commit to a stronger link between the schools and social service providers to provide an integrated support network for youth at risk.

Other Actions:

- 1 Increase cooperation between higher education and local schools by developing special college preparatory programs and other opportunities for city students to take advantage of higher education resources in the community.
- 2 Develop enhanced dropout reduction policies.

VOICES OF THE VISION



Lam Pham

Lam Pham guides a group of his fellow teenagers through the Lake Champlain Basin Science Center in Burlington. A freshman at Burlington High School, the 14-year-old Vietnamese-American youth has been serving as an exhibit interpreter at the museum for more than a year. He sees the part-time job as integral to his efforts to support both his fellow youths and Southeast Asian immigrants in the city.

“At the Science Center, we work to give young people a broader understanding of what is going on in the lake. The goal is to motivate them to get involved with the environment,” Lam says.

Lam is an articulate and forceful advocate for youths. “There’s a real lack of communication with young people in our community—especially with the immigrant community,” he notes. “We need to do a better job of communicating so that young people will get more interested in what is happening here. It is especially important for young people to get involved in advocating for their own ethnic communities because we have growing diversity.”

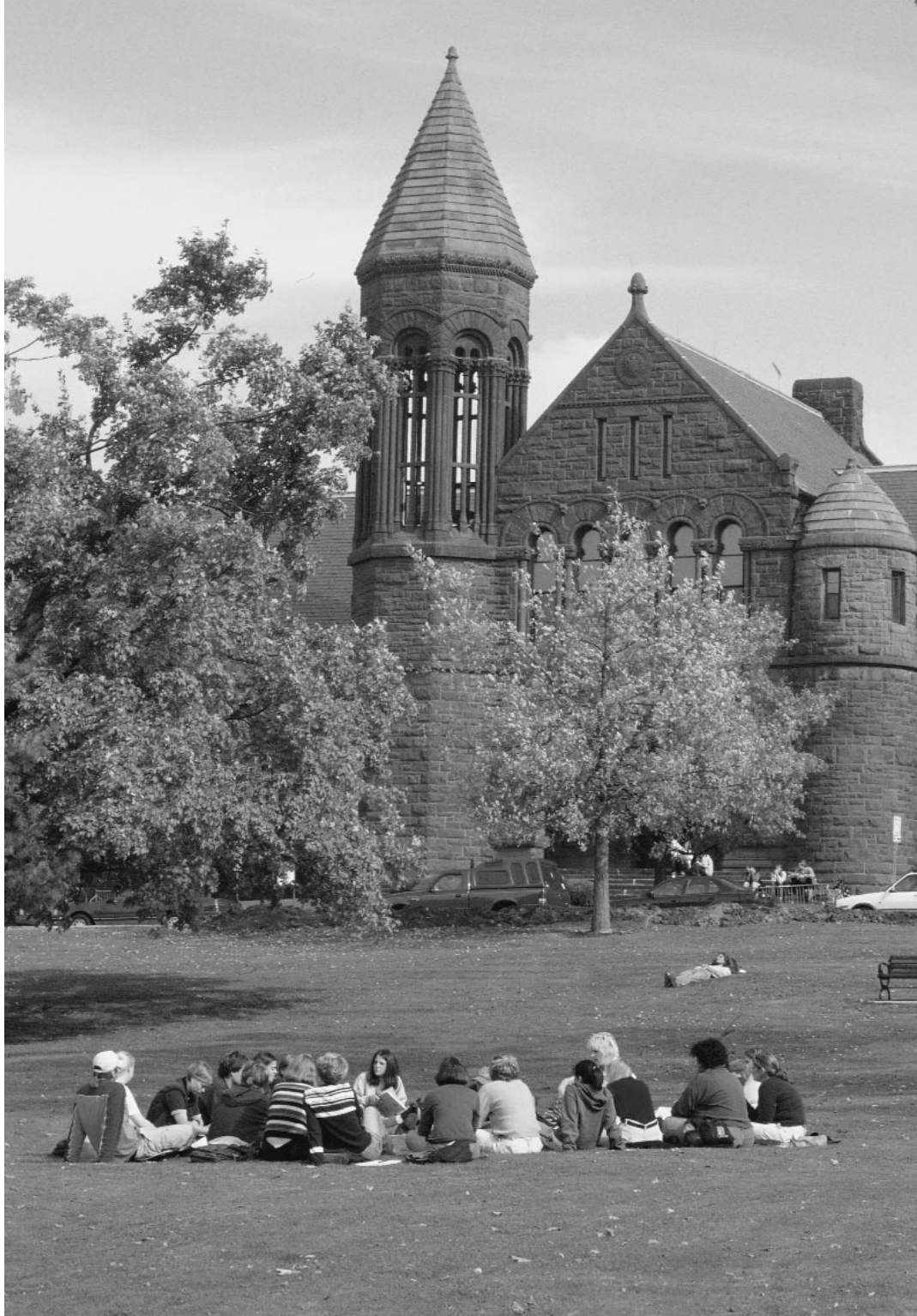
Lam believes in empowering young people in Burlington by lowering the voting age on citywide issues to 16 and by naming youth representatives to boards and commissions. “Youths need to know that they are being heard and respected,” he says.

A strong student with a special interest in mathematics, Lam also calls for greater computer literacy and access to high technology in the city.

“Finding money is always a problem, but we need programs to get people more familiar with things like the web and the internet. It would be great to have local web pages in different languages to help connect our immigrants,” he says.

“This should be for people of all ages, not just youths. We need new and meaningful ways for people to express their opinions and be involved.”





LIFELONG LEARNING

GOAL: In 2030, Burlington residents from preschoolers through senior citizens have access to lifelong education programs that assure the skills needed to learn, work, raise a family, contribute to the community, and maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Education is a lifelong process that should not end with youth. It should also be available to people of all ages to provide them with the skills they need to be successful and responsible members of the community.

Preschoolers through senior citizens in Burlington should benefit from a wealth of opportunities to build the social and job skills critical to being successful members of our community.

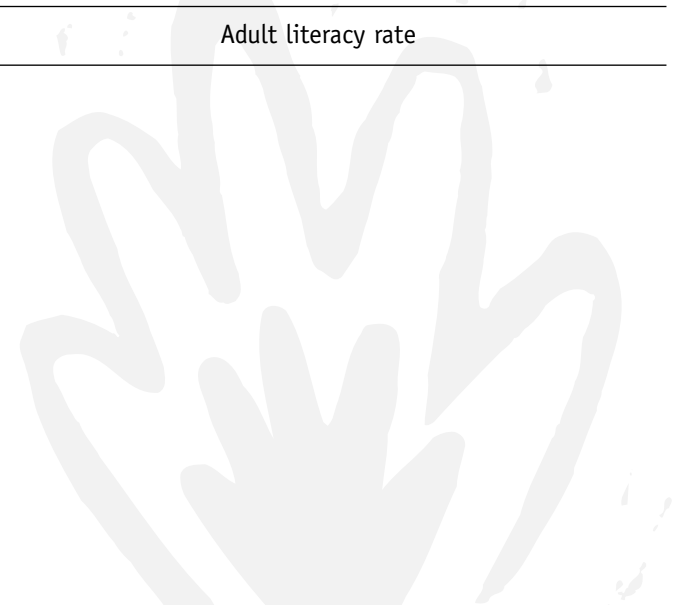
MEASURING OUR PROGRESS

INDICATORS TO WATCH

Children ready for kindergarten

Continuing education enrollments

Adult literacy rate



Priority Actions:

- 1 Fund effective early childhood education programs to assure equal educational opportunities for all.
- 2 Develop schools to serve as multigenerational community centers for educational, cultural, and recreational activities, including parent education, social services, pregnancy prevention, and other supports for all community members.
- 3 Support and adequately fund libraries and other literacy programs.

Other Actions:

- 1 Strengthen programs to promote pregnancy prevention and effective parenting skills.
- 2 Develop a new indoor recreation and community center.

Language	# of Burlington School District ESL students
Bosnian/Serbo-Croatian	111
Vietnamese/Cambodian	103
Tibetan	29
Chinese	13
Russian	5
Spanish	7
French (Africa)	6
Armenian	7
Slovak	3
Romanian	6
Japanese	2
Albanian	2
Greek	2
Somalian	1
Persian	1
Korean	1
Tamil	1
German	1
Punjabi	1
Arabic	2
total	304

Source: Burlington School Department

AT OUR BEST

Wheeler Community School Family Room

Nestled on the ground floor of the H.O. Wheeler Community School, the Family Room exemplifies the kind of multiservice, family-oriented community center that will help Burlington become a sustainable community. Operated by the Visiting Nurse Association as part of the VNA Family Partnership, the Family Room is one of three such parent-child centers in Chittenden County.

A casual glance at a typical month's calendar at the Family Room reveals the wide array of community-building activities that take place there, fostering healthy child development, stronger families, and multigenerational supports. These activities include an accredited preschool program, baby classes for parents; on-site health education and support services, mothers' and fathers' groups; drop-in play activities; family suppers; cultural nights celebrating community diversity; and workshops on everything from reading with children to gardening, sewing, cooking, basic life skills, and more.

In addition to this diverse mix of services, the Family Room also connects residents to critical issues of the day, hosting forums on topics such as the housing crisis and renters' rights, and providing residents with a place to register to vote.

Since its inception in 1989, the VNA Family Room has been a vital link to the community for hundreds of young families in the Old North End. It is a place where children blossom; parents share in the learning process; and teachers, volunteers, students, and people of all ages come together to work, play, and grow as a community.





Burlington’s natural attributes were cited as one of the very best things about the city by all the groups who participated in the Legacy Project. These environmental assets include Lake Champlain and the waterfront, with their many recreational opportunities and stunning viewscapes; attractive city parks and beaches; and the proximity of some of the nation’s best outdoor recreation areas. These natural wonders are an important part of why Burlington is such an attractive place to live, work, and raise a family. If, as Burlington grows, our environment deteriorates and becomes impoverished, then we become impoverished as well.

Burlington cannot achieve sustainability without regional cooperation on environmental issues. Two objectives that at first seem contradictory are in fact inextricably linked. Burlington must work to preserve significant open space within the city limits while also striving to absorb a significant percentage of regional growth that would otherwise contribute to sprawl in neighboring communities in Chittenden County and northwestern Vermont.

Together with other nearby communities, we must grapple with pressing development and transportation issues. Burlington cannot be truly sustainable if the city does not work to preserve, protect, and enhance its natural environment—from clean water to drink and air to breathe to open space that is available for everyone to enjoy.

Transportation issues are also central to this challenge: we cannot continue to rely on the automobile as the primary mode of travel for our growing population. If we do, the results will be worsening congestion, noise, pollution, and sprawl, both in the city and throughout the region.

Any successful plan to achieve sustainability in Burlington must place a premium on the personal responsibility of each individual for the cleanliness and beauty of our environment. Government, businesses, and non-profit organizations can only accomplish so much without a concerted commitment by private citizens to take individual action that will attain and maintain a cleaner, healthier environment.

ENVIRONMENT • OVERVIEW

Air Quality

- Provide for safe bicycle and pedestrian access
- Promote and invest in nonpolluting transportation technologies
- Invest in ongoing air quality monitoring and reporting

Lake Champlain Water Quality

- Minimize use of pollutants
- Implement broad-based environmental education
- Invest in ongoing water quality monitoring and reporting

Energy and Resource Conservation

- Explore sustainable renewable energy sources
- Implement energy conservation measures
- Provide incentives for reuse and recycling efforts





AIR QUALITY

GOAL: In 2030, harmful air emissions in the city have been reduced significantly and air quality is greatly improved.

Air quality is one of Burlington's more pressing environmental concerns. The highest concentrations of locally generated hazardous air contaminants in Vermont are consistently found in Burlington. While there has been no definitive evaluation to date of the individual sources of these contaminants, the vast majority of contaminants contributing to the city's air quality challenges are generated in part from

automobile combustion. It can thus be anticipated that continued increases in automobile use will increase hazardous air contamination in our region.

Better transportation planning and reduced reliance on fossil fuels will play the greatest role in countering this problem, but research and public education will be vitally important as well. No actions will have a greater impact on the quality of our air and

the enjoyment of our environment than diminishing our present reliance on the automobile and fossil fuels. Harmful emissions will be decreased markedly, noise and congestion in the city's downtown and neighborhoods will lessen, and sprawl will no longer be fostered and exacerbated by a single-occupant automobile "culture."

Priority Actions:

- ➊ Provide for safe, bicycle and pedestrian access to all areas of the city and surrounding communities.
- ➋ Promote and invest in alternatively fueled vehicles and other nonpolluting technologies for transportation.
- ➌ Invest in a system for ongoing monitoring and reporting of air quality.

Other Actions:

- ➍ Improve and protect air quality by minimizing the use of fossil-fueled vehicles in the urban core.
- ➎ Provide financial incentives for businesses to reduce air pollution.
- ➏ Develop and implement an urban reforestation plan.

AT OUR BEST

Lake Champlain Bikeways

There's no better way to enjoy the historical riches of Burlington and the beauty of its natural surroundings than up close, perched atop a bicycle. Lake Champlain Bikeways, a public/private partnership coordinated by the Lake Champlain Basin Program, connects a primary 350-mile loop around the lake with 26 additional local loops, encompassing more than 750 miles of urban, suburban, and rural routes in Vermont, New York, and Quebec. Stretching from Whitehall, New York in the south to Chambly, Quebec in the north, it is a national role model for bicycle path networks drawing cyclists of all types.

"Our loops are an asset not only to the tourist, but also to the local recreational cyclist," comments Maja Smith, who oversees the Lake Champlain Bikeways effort as the recreation coordinator for the Lake Champlain Basin Program.

Founded in 1993, Lake Champlain Bikeways has collaborated with public officials in Vermont, New York, and Quebec to designate official bike paths such as those in Burlington and South Burlington and to identify existing state and local roadways that are linked to form the overall network. The program also works for cyclists with regional transportation agencies and county highway departments, urging these agencies to make roadway improvements where needed to assure a safer, more comfortable bicycling experience.

That experience can be a culturally enriching one as well. "There's this whole sense of enhancing appreciation for our history, our cultural resources, our natural resources," notes Smith. Many of the loops in the Lake Champlain Bikeways system incorporate educational themes tied to the lake and the communities and countryside that surround it.

Smith cites the "Cycle the City" loop in Burlington as a prime example of the program's effort to link the recreational and the educational in a rich mix. The



MEASURING OUR PROGRESS

INDICATORS TO WATCH

Vermont Agency of Natural Resources ambient air quality data for ozone and carbon monoxide/dioxide

10-mile, self-guided historic tour takes cyclists along the waterfront and lake, through the Intervale, then on to the University of Vermont (UVM) and Burlington's neighborhoods. Along the way, cyclists can experience such Burlington touchstones as Battery Park, site of an American encampment during the War of 1812; the Ethan Allen Homestead; the agricultural riches of the Winooski River floodplain in the Intervale; UVM; and the architectural splendors of the many mansions in the Hill Section.

Having gradually built community support at both the government and grassroots levels, Lake Champlain Bikeways now hopes to expand its regional network of bike paths significantly.

"This is a bottom-up process that entails working closely with community groups throughout the region. We're trying to get cyclists from all over the country to see this area as a tourist destination that has a lot to offer. Bikeways can cut down on vehicular traffic while people are visiting here and they can also be a boon to our own residents who want to use bicycles as a major means of transportation for work or play," says Smith.

"Our primary focus is to try to create a more bicycle-friendly region and generate more bicycle usage. We're really working to develop a bicycle culture."



LAKE CHAMPLAIN WATER QUALITY

GOAL: In 2030, water quality in Lake Champlain has improved significantly. The lake is accessible to all residents, whether for drinking water, swimming, fishing, or travel. Ongoing monitoring provides an annual report to the public on the environmental health of the lake. Burlington youth grow up with an understanding of their role as caretakers of the environment.

The Burlington Legacy Project sees Lake Champlain, the waterfront, and the Winooski River corridor as the centerpieces of our urban natural environment. As the city grows, sufficient resources must be allocated to keep the lake clean and accessible to all, while preserving it for such traditional uses as swimming, fishing, and providing drinking water.

Because every city resident also has a personal responsibility to take actions that help improve and preserve the health of our environment, environmental education efforts will be of critical importance in helping people to meet this civic duty.



MEASURING OUR PROGRESS

INDICATORS TO WATCH

Phosphorous levels in the main lake

Number of beach closings annually

Lake Champlain Basin Project ecological indicators

Priority Actions:

- ❶ Minimize the use of pollutants, including pesticides, herbicides, and chemical fertilizers by both public and private entities in the city.
- ❷ Implement broad-based environmental education programs for people of all ages in the community, emphasizing how individuals can make a difference in their environment.
- ❸ Invest in a system for ongoing monitoring and reporting of water quality in the watershed.

Other Actions:

- ❶ Provide financial incentives for businesses to reduce water pollution.
- ❷ Continue to upgrade waste water and storm water systems and explore alternative systems to prevent point source pollution.
- ❸ Design and implement an annual Earth Day education program citywide that includes beach, stream, and neighborhood cleanups.
- ❹ Support and expand the Lake Champlain Basin Science Center.
- ❺ Coordinate water, sewage, land use, and transportation services with other municipalities.



Public Beach Closings, 1995–1999

BEACH	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
North Beach	7	*	0	0	1
Blanchard Beach ¹	closed	closed	closed	closed	closed
Cove Beach	0	0	0	0	0
Leddy Beach	5	0	0	0	0

¹ Blanchard Beach is closed indefinitely because of consistently high bacteria loads from Englesby Brook.

* The south end of North Beach was closed for several days during the end of July to the beginning of August 1996 because of high coliform counts in a small tributary that flows into the lake near the beach's south end.

Source: "Progress 2000, An Opportunities for Action Implementation Report," Lake Champlain Basin Program



ENERGY AND RESOURCE CONSERVATION

GOAL: In 2030, the city operates at the cutting edge of alternative energy technologies and resource conservation, exploring and incorporating a variety of energy sources into its daily life.

Blessed with a strong environmental ethic among the Vermont populace, Burlington is well-positioned to embrace energy and resource conservation as priorities as the city moves toward sustainability. Coincident with its growth, Burlington should continuously seek opportunities to incorporate

sustainable, renewable resources in its energy mix; promote conservation measures, implement environmentally friendly building standards, and aggressively encourage recycling and resource recovery efforts by city government, businesses, and individual residents alike.

MEASURING OUR PROGRESS

INDICATORS TO WATCH

Total and per capita energy consumption, residential and commercial

Kilowatt hours produced with renewable energy sources versus non-renewable

Total solid waste versus total recycled waste (solid waste diverted from landfill)



Priority Actions:

- 1 Explore the development of sustainable, renewable energy sources.
- 2 Implement effective energy conservation measures.
- 3 Assist reuse and recycling efforts with financial incentives for businesses and households.

Other Actions:

- 1 Install low-impact lighting throughout the city.
- 2 Strengthen building standards to make them more environmentally sound and develop sources of environmental building materials.



AT OUR BEST

The Fletcher Allen Health Care Composting Project

Each day, the waste hauler for Fletcher Allen Health Care in Burlington carts nearly 500 pounds of kitchen wastes away from the large, hilltop complex that is home to Vermont's leading health care provider.

Leftover foods from patient and employee meals, trimmings from salad fixings and vegetables, stale bread, broken cookies, melted ice cream, and kitchen paper goods—all find their way not to a local landfill, but to the city's Intervale area, where they are converted to compost.

Intervale Compost is a unique partnership between a non-profit organization, the Intervale Foundation, and the Chittenden Solid Waste District. Founded in 1988, the operation plays a key role in diverting compostible material from area landfills. In fact, Intervale Compost has grown into Vermont's largest composting operation.

Joining Fletcher Allen in providing food waste to the facility are restaurants like those in the Perry Restaurant Group and large food producers like Ben and Jerry's. Project participants save up to 70 percent on "tipping fees" by sending the wastes to the Intervale rather than the landfill. In addition, composting returns valuable organic resources to the land, rather than burying them in capped, closed landfills. The high-quality matter produced from these food wastes nurtures and restores soil on farms in Burlington's last remaining agricultural area, the Intervale, and also provides local gardeners, farmers, and landscapers with rich, organic, premium compost. Even more heartening, proceeds from local sales of the compost help fund sustainable community agriculture projects through the Intervale Foundation.

Converting food waste to compost is another form of recycling—and another way all of us, from individuals to the area's largest companies, can help "close the loop" and build a sustainable future.



ACTION

Progress toward the Burlington Legacy Project's goal of a sustainable city will require broad-based collaboration among a diverse range of government entities, businesses, organizations, educational institutions, health care providers, neighborhood groups, and individual citizens. Each must take responsibility for portions of this plan, providing the direction, commitment, and resources it will take to make this vision a reality.





THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT

A combination of “top-down” and “bottom-up” approaches will be necessary for Burlington to reach its full potential as a larger and sustainable city. Government is best positioned to assist by continuing and strengthening its coordinating role, helping to develop programs where needed and

providing funding and other resources for efforts at all levels, from the grassroots on up.

The most essential role for government is to build understanding for and commitment to sustainability at the regional level. Designation of Burlington as the region’s primary growth center in the coming years will require commitment from regional planners, elected officials, and citizens

throughout northwestern Vermont. The success of all elements of the Legacy Plan hinges on significant, sustainable growth in population, jobs, and housing in the Burlington core. This cannot be achieved without the cooperation of neighboring communities. Building this consensus must be government’s highest priority.

THE ROLE OF THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY

Businesses in our city have a direct interest in assuring that Burlington offers a skilled, high-quality workforce; creative financial incentives and other supports for new and existing businesses; and telecommunications and

other infrastructure enhancements that help businesses work more economically, efficiently, and effectively. Business can take a leadership role in developing and supporting civic projects.

The business community brings many resources to the Legacy Project table, from capital to technical expertise to providing training sites for city residents seeking to build job skills.





Banks and other financial institutions can offer creative financing strategies and make a commitment to community reinvestment, assuring that financial resources remain in the community to blaze a path to sustainability. Businesses can embrace and help guide the Legacy Plan by providing support for education, assisting schools in curriculum development, and by offering work-study and internship opportunities for our youths. Environmentally conscious purchasing and production policies will help sustain a cleaner, healthier environment and a commitment to supporting other local businesses will play a major role in steering the city toward economic self-reliance.

THE ROLE OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Non-profit social service, health care, environmental, and neighborhood organizations will play central roles in achieving the goals of the Legacy Project. Working closely with government, schools, and the business community, these organizations will be essential in implementing the actions of the Legacy Plan.

Through services to their clients and members, financial resources, research and publication efforts, and community outreach efforts, non-profit organizations can have a profound impact on all aspects of the Legacy Plan. These local organizations also have an important role in maximizing the strengths of the individuals they serve, helping to tap the cultural viewpoints, expertise, and energy of their constituents in the service of a sustainable Burlington.

THE ROLE OF EDUCATION

Educators from the primary grades through our local colleges and universities will be in the forefront of achieving a sustainable city.

The Legacy Project requires a commitment to the lifelong education of Burlington residents. City schools will play a critical role in shaping curricula that provide youths with all the skills they need to thrive in life, from job training to respect for cultural diversity to a commitment to collaboration and community service.

School facilities can also be made available on a year-round, full-day basis to serve as neighborhood community centers offering a wide range of educational, social, and cultural opportunities for residents of all ages, cultures, and lifestyles.

Higher education institutions have tremendous resources that can be brought to bear on virtually all aspects of the Legacy Project. Colleges and universities can work as partners with the city in providing housing alternatives for students to help ease the housing crunch dramatically.





Higher education institutions can also tap the expertise and energies of faculty and administrators and serve as a source for job growth in new industries with new technologies. Tapping into and assisting colleges and universities to weave students into the community fabric, serving as mentors for younger youths and providing community service, will also help break down the walls of academe and move education out into the community. Higher education can further assist by providing consulting services and developing internships and work-study opportunities with local businesses, public schools, and non-profit organizations serving the community.

THE ROLE OF YOUTH

An openness to change, enthusiasm, and vitality make our young people essential players in achieving a sustainable Burlington. As government, the business community, and schools empower and educate young people to participate more inclusively and effectively in policy-making, youths must step up and take responsibility for their own education and for service to

their community. They can do this through a variety of avenues, including work-study programs, internships, and volunteering with local non-profit organizations and neighborhood groups. Youths must work collaboratively with each other and with adults throughout the community to learn how decisions are made and to take part in those activities by serving on student councils, boards, and other decision-making bodies, as well as by voting in city elections.

THE ROLE OF INDIVIDUALS

Increased knowledge, skills, changing attitudes, and community involvement by each city resident will all be vital to the success of this plan. Individual citizens can contribute to the Legacy Project by investing the time and energy to educate themselves about the many issues addressed here, then choosing an area where they can make an impact through their work, volunteer efforts; community service; and educating friends, family, and coworkers.

Individual roles as consumers are particularly important to sustainability. Commitments to supporting and using public transportation, minimizing automobile use, contributing to neighborhood cleanup activities, using products that have minimal impact on water and air quality, and purchasing goods and services from local businesses are critical. So, too, is a commitment to being involved in the community, voting in every election and taking every opportunity to participate in decision-making about major issues affecting neighborhoods and the city as a whole.





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BURLINGTON'S
LEGACY
PROJECT

BURLINGTON LEGACY PROJECT

ACTION PLAN



**Becoming a
Sustainable
Community**